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**THE UNITED STATES, NATO, AND SECURITY RELATIONS WITH
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

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The United States, NATO and Security Relations with Central and Eastern Europe

Ever since the revolutions of 1989, the United States and its NATO allies have been grappling with a new Europe, a continent in transition. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the old bipolar Cold War model of international relations was shattered, leaving nothing to take its place but uncertainty. In the intervening decade, the search for a new paradigm has proceeded in fits and starts, and has often yielded uncertain results. Simply maintaining the status quo with Russia, its newly independent republics and the states of central and eastern Europe proved inadequate, but the creation and implementation of new strategies and approaches for dealing with the region has not come easily. Fresh initiatives have tended to emerge slowly, with a lengthy gestation period, and have not always wrought success.

From the standpoint of the countries in the region, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact was both exhilarating and disturbing. The sudden collapse of the existing defense and security structure created an unsettling security vacuum, but also presented a golden opportunity to improve their overall security posture dramatically by offering the chance to enter into a more equal and well-rounded partnership with like minded nations. The dominant challenge before them was, and is, to determine which combination of policies, practices and institutions ~~are~~ is most likely to effectively promote and enhance their security over the long term.

This paper examines the dilemma of fostering and maintaining the stability and security of central and eastern Europe (hereafter CEE). Ten years into the new era seems a good time to take stock of where we stand in CEE security relations. What policies and procedures are in place to ensure the security, stability and independence of CEE states? Is it enough? Are the extant institutional frameworks sufficient, do they require modification, or do we need entirely new institutions altogether? How do our NATO allies approach the problem and what do the CEE states themselves think? My intent is to conduct a thorough examination of current policies, procedures and institutions to determine if we are on track or off course.

The focus is on NATO enlargement and U.S. policy options within a NATO context. In addition, I examine the parallel enlargement of the European Union (EU) and the associated effort to give the EU a stronger and more independent defense identity. The final result ~~should be~~ is not only a comprehensive examination of the issues, but also offers ~~potentially useful~~ policy prescriptions.

A Tough Neighborhood

For centuries, the region¹ has served as a buffer zone and battleground for major powers seeking to advance their interests. More often than not, the resulting conflicts have engendered disastrous consequences for the CEE states unfortunate enough to be caught in the middle. From the imposition of Ottoman rule through multiple partitions of Poland and a series of devastating wars eventually leading to over forty years of Soviet occupation, it is fair to say that it has been a long time since the region enjoyed a period of peace and stability along with freedom and independence.

Clearly, the community of democratic nations has a vital interest in the security and stability of Europe. Twice in the twentieth century, conflicts in Europe have precipitated warfare on an unprecedented scale, plunging the world into the most deadly and costly wars in history. More recently, events in the Balkans have demonstrated that Europe is not immune from the sort of violent and destabilizing genocidal civil wars that plague other regions of the world.

In the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States and NATO were faced with the challenge of defining a new CEE order and determining how best to secure the region. This involved fostering the growth of democratic institutions, aiding the transition from a

¹ For the purpose of this paper, I am defining the central and east European region as comprising the six non-Soviet members of the former Warsaw Pact (accounting for the reunification of Germany and the split of Czechoslovakia): Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia; the three Baltic former Soviet republics: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; and one former Yugoslav republic: Slovenia. Geographically, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova lie in the CEE region, as do the Balkan states of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. However, the circumstances of their security situation differ significantly from that of the CEE states, so they will be dealt with separately.

command to a market economy, and most of all, ensuring a stable and secure environment to set the conditions for the desired transformation to take place.

NATO began its outreach program to the former Warsaw Pact states with the July 1990 London Declaration² and at the November 1991 Rome Summit adopted a new Strategic Concept to replace the badly outdated 1967 Flexible Response strategy. The Rome Summit also moved to meet the challenge by creating the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) to address CEE security issues. Originally conceived as a consultative forum for Russia and the non-Soviet members of the Warsaw Pact, it expanded to include all the successor states of the former Soviet Union. NATO's best intentions proved woefully inadequate however, as it quickly became apparent that the NACC was an unwieldy organization, unprepared and ill-equipped to reflect the immensely broad range of hopes, aspirations and demands of its members.

The CEE States Set the Agenda

In the meantime, the CEE states performed their own calculus on how best to secure their future. The conclusion they reached was definitive and unequivocal. Only NATO membership would suffice.

Emerging from decades of Soviet domination, their top security priority ~~security objective~~ was to maintain their independence and territorial integrity and avoid at all costs any possible loss of sovereignty or reabsorption into the Russian sphere of influence. They had little faith in international organizations, as the weakness of international institutions had allowed the rearmament of Germany during the inter war years and had not prevented the imposition of Soviet hegemony throughout the region after the war. Membership in international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the European Community (EC)³ was seen as necessary to facilitate the exercise of sovereign rights and served to enhance national security in a broader sense, but simply didn't answer the call as a strategy for ensuring military security while

² The Soviet Union and non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members were invited to establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO.

³ Now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU).

living in the shadow of the former Soviet Union. Moreover, their newly reestablished independence led to a sense of psychological insecurity and feeling of being adrift. None had the size or wealth to deal independently with the full range of potential threats they might face, to include the rekindling of historic conflicts among themselves in addition to any possible revanchism by Russia. Ad hoc regional arrangements, such as periodic meetings of the Visegrad Four,⁴ proved useful as a consultative forum but realistically lacked potential as a possible means of guaranteeing future security and stability. Events in the Balkans reinforced this line of thinking and increased their conviction that only an institution that firmly anchored the United States to Europe, and had the full array of American power and potential at its disposal, could genuinely underwrite their security. This led to the obvious and inescapable conclusion that membership in NATO was the only viable option.

NATO Regains the Initiative

With a number of CEE ~~nations~~ states clamoring for membership and NATO responses badly lagging behind rapidly rising expectations throughout the region, a fresh approach was urgently required. In January 1994, it came in the form of the creation of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Originally conceived as a stop gap measure to deflect pressure for immediate membership, the PfP program has proven immensely successful not only as a sort of halfway house for prospective members, but also as an effective tool for outreach and engagement with a number of other participating nations. Focusing on peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and search and rescue (and scrupulously avoiding warfighting) it not only fulfilled its basic mission of slowing down the rush to membership, it has also evolved over time into one of NATO's most effective tools of peacetime engagement. Not only has it created a flexible and adaptive forum for the Alliance to interact with a wide array of nations⁵ with differing goals and interests, but it also laid the groundwork for the participation of many of these nations in actual peacekeeping operations. Moreover, it allowed time for the

⁴ The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

⁵ Ireland became the 29th signatory in December 1999. There are currently 25 countries in the program, accounting for new NATO members Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as Malta, the only country to join PfP and later withdraw.

development of a comprehensive regime of milestones and procedures governing the mechanics of accession to emerge. It also created breathing space until the July 1997 Madrid Summit, when NATO invited the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to begin accession talks and reaffirmed its commitment under Article 10 that no democratic nation in Europe would be excluded from consideration for membership.

Enlargement Today

With the admission of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary on 12 March 1999, six weeks before the Alliance's 50th anniversary summit in Washington, the issue of enlargement and security in central and eastern Europe moved off center stage. But while the issue was effectively tabled, it was not put to rest. When NATO accepted in principle the decision to enlarge at the Brussels Summit in 1994, it committed the Alliance to a long-term process with far reaching consequences, many of which remain undetermined. As yet there is no clear definition of how far NATO will expand or how fast, simply that the process will continue and the door remains open to new members.

While Russia ~~makes clear~~ continues to express its displeasure with the enlargement process and NATO in general, a host of prospective candidates are polishing their credentials and beginning to clamor anew for membership.⁶ These nations met twice last year, in Vilnius and in Sofia, to generate and maintain political momentum toward membership.⁷ Meanwhile, the United States is preoccupied with domestic issues and the Europeans are moving toward the establishment of a stronger and more independent European defense identity. The transatlantic relationship is strained by divergent views of goals and purpose and suffers from the lack of a clear and tangible common unifying threat. Regarding enlargement, there is little consensus within the Alliance on the way ahead. The next NATO summit ~~must be held, as agreed at the 50th anniversary summit, no later than 2002 and is currently is scheduled to take place in November 2002 during autumn next year in Prague.~~

⁶ There are currently nine nations that have formally expressed an interest in joining NATO: Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

⁷ The official communiqué from the May 2000 Vilnius meeting calls upon the Alliance to "fulfill the promise of the Washington summit" by inviting one or more of them to join NATO.

Some would argue that focus and continuity in U.S. foreign policy was never a strong suit of the Clinton administration, and the change in administrations has exacerbated the sense of disjointedness in many areas. In addition, many Europeans, both within and outside the CEE region, have evinced concern that a Republican administration may be more prone to unilateralism and disengagement from Europe. In their eyes, the formulation of other policy, such as toward Iraq, North Korea, and China appears to have priority. On both sides of the Atlantic, there is a sense that no one seems to be paying much attention to the ~~salient~~ (come up with a different adjective along the lines of "important" because "salient" implies that people are paying attention and are interested) issues that were set aside two years ago. The celebratory atmosphere of the anniversary summit was somewhat contrived as the rapidly developing Kosovo crisis first dampened the festive mood and then developed in such a way as to command NATO's full attention. With a new administration in the saddle, it is time to reengage. Now is the time for a thorough analysis and in depth examination to prepare a comprehensive U.S. position and begin to form Alliance consensus rather than waiting for the issue to pop up on its own like a unwelcome rake to the face.

Past Success

In retrospect, the first round of NATO enlargement was handled fairly well, successfully striking a balance between the desires of the candidate members to speed things up and Russia's desire to slow down the process and stop it altogether. After overcoming its initial bobbling in lacking both a concept and a plan, NATO came up with a viable roadmap for both and implemented in a steady and consistent manner. NATO dealt with the issue in a measured, incremental way, gradually building what is today a relatively comprehensive, if deliberately open ended, regime of enlargement programs, processes and requirements.

[It is my belief that overall, the Alliance got it right the first time. In the end, the three best candidates were invited and admitted. The process ensured that the candidates were reasonably ready upon accession and prepared to begin contributing to the Alliance almost immediately, even if in small measure.] (There is a note on

p. 8 about this bracketed text.) NATO should seek to duplicate this success, realizing that the easy part is done and the road ahead now becomes much steeper and more treacherous, particularly regarding the Baltic States. There are many that argue otherwise, however. Some argue passionately that the process should be paused indefinitely or stopped altogether, while others maintain just as ardently that the Alliance must expand quickly and aggressively before the historic window of opportunity closes.

The Options

At one end of the debate are those that argue for an indefinite pause in the process. They correctly point out that NATO has already let in the three strongest candidates, and all three are struggling to meet mutually agreed upon targets for defense spending, restructuring of the armed forces, military reform and transformation.⁸ Progress has been painfully slow, and it will realistically take years before a reasonable level of interoperability is achieved and the gap in capabilities significantly narrowed. Critics aver that a pause is in order to allow the new members time to catch up.

The primary problem with this approach would be the likely damage to NATO's credibility. Enlargement decisions are first and foremost political decisions, and reasserting the Alliance's commitment to Article 10 while inviting no new members would ring hollow on the international stage. A variant of this option would be to promise to invite one or more members at the summit after Prague, effectively postponing a decision for another year or two. But this too would seem to be too much like dissembling and the Alliance would probably find it hard to implement, defend and justify.

In addition, recent events in Moldova would seem to undermine this position even further. In February 2001, the Moldovan Communists swept back into power, winning the parliamentary elections decisively. Tilting strongly toward Moscow, they promise to pursue an aggressively integrationist Russophile policy, including the reestablishment of Russian as an official language and the

⁸ For example, after gaining membership, Hungary revised its pre-accession commitments to raise defense spending downward by .1 percent per annum.

possible permanent stationing of Russian troops on Moldovan territory. While probably insufficient to engender recriminations and a "Who lost Moldova?" debate in the West, this turn of events probably is sufficient to generate increased discussion and create a greater sense of urgency about the pace and scope of NATO engagement and enlargement in the CEE region.

On the other end of the spectrum are those ~~that~~ who (I generally use who when I'm talking about people) argue for extending an invitation to the largest possible number of candidates, perhaps even to all nine. The so-called "big bang" approach presupposes a commitment to complete Europe, fulfilling the promise of ensuring a Europe whole and free. Implicit in the proposal is also the assumption that we are currently presented with a historic window of opportunity which may close suddenly and unexpectedly. It follows that the West would be remiss to fail to lock in the spoils of victory in the Cold War, permanently guaranteeing the security of the CEE nations. Big bang adherents also argue that early accession removes the pressure of competing for selection, easing a political burden on NATO and allowing the aspirant countries to focus on building sufficient domestic support to implement meaningful reform.

On a theoretical level, the counter argument holds that such an approach would likely have just the opposite psychological effect. It would create the impression of drawing new dividing lines across Europe, sending the wrong signal to those on the outside looking in as well as to neutral countries within the zone. More practically, this approach would entail significant geopolitical costs and risks. It would be difficult for Russia not to react strongly to such a bold move by NATO. Not only would it be impossible for Russia to maintain a cooperative relationship with NATO, the inevitable linkage to other issues would cause repercussions in discussions on missile defense, arms control, non-proliferation, anti-terrorism and a host of other issues requiring bilateral engagement. Further, given its ongoing political crisis and the shakiness of its democratic institutions, one can not discount the possible second and third order effects on Ukraine.⁹

⁹ See "Schemes and Scandals in Ukraine", *The Economist*, 20 January 2001, pp. 43-44.

Finally, experience with the first tranche has shown the advantages of early accession argument to be false. Actual membership has proven to be a significant disincentive for continued progress in military restructuring and reform. The Czech Republic in particular has become far more dilatory in its reform effort, but all three new members suffer from significant shortcomings concerning issues that should already have been resolved. Foremost among these are the numbers and ability of NATO language qualified personnel, adherence to Alliance security standards and the passage of a comprehensive and compatible legal framework. (in general this paragraph is inconsistent with the argument presented in the bracket text on p. 6)

Occupying the middle ground are those ~~that~~ who advocate the Alliance utilize the Prague Summit to invite one or more aspirants to begin accession negotiations, aiming toward membership in 2005 or 2006. This approach roughly corresponds to the official U.S. position, which states that the United States strongly supports keeping the door open but will not prematurely accept unprepared applicants. In my view, this is a prudent course of action that maintains Alliance credibility and avoids the potential costs and risks of a more aggressive approach. However, while staying the course on enlargement is the right decision, it is not one without drawbacks. In order to reduce or ameliorate their effects, I also think it wise to review some of the major arguments against enlargement before proceeding to a discussion of the potential candidates and strategies for implementation.

Arguments against Enlargement

The counter arguments to this proposition generally revolve around three fundamental objections. The first is concern over dilution of the Alliance. NATO operates by consensus, and clear strategic direction becomes more difficult to achieve as the Alliance grows larger. But at what point does it become unwieldy? At 19 members now, NATO presumably will enlarge to anywhere from 20 to 26 members in the next round. This may make it more difficult to arrive at consensus, but I would offer the following observations. First, this argument has been advanced each time NATO expands, but in four previous iterations, it ~~hasn't~~ has not (avoid using contractions in scholarly writing) seemed to have a major impact so far. Second, it

is useful to remember that consensus is never easy, and on some issues the discussion seemingly drags on endlessly before it is achieved, if at all. Consensus tends to come about more quickly when a crisis is at hand and action is required. Another essential ingredient is clear U.S. leadership. This ~~doesn't~~ does not mean that the United States will always get its way - far from it. Rather, it means that the Alliance is unlikely to achieve consensus for action on major issues such as the dual track decision to deploy intermediate range nuclear weapons or the decision to intervene in Kosovo without the active participation and leadership of its largest and most powerful member.

So is NATO less agile at 25 members than at 19? Perhaps. But any reduction in responsiveness and agility is more likely to be issue driven than simply a result of an increase in the number of representatives with a seat at the table.

The second major objection is concern over the national baggage NATO inherits by accepting new members. In addition to being fledgling democracies with wobbly market economies, several of the CEE candidates come equipped with a host of historic problems, ranging from societal issues of ethnicity, culture and religion to unresolved border disputes. The potential for minor third order problems on the periphery of NATO to become Alliance problems increases greatly. Proponents of aggressive enlargement counter that this is precisely why these countries should be invited to join NATO. The Alliance functions as a collective forum for the peaceful resolution of bilateral disputes. It fosters political maturity and binds those involved in the dispute together. Greece and Turkey remain at loggerheads over Cyprus, yet their common interest and commitment to NATO circumscribes their options and maintains a degree of predictability and stability otherwise not possible. Similar constraining influences would presumably prevent or ameliorate the effects of disputes arising among new members. Likewise, the consultative obligations contained under Article 4 would presumably serve to dampen the effects of disputes involving new members on the front line of NATO and non-member neighbors. Logically there are limits to the amount of potential instability that NATO is willing to underwrite, and that is why candidates and groups of candidates are carefully screened and evaluated before they are invited to join. Individual nations can be

accepted or rejected on their merits, but these considerations should not be allowed to derail the overall process.

The third objection, in a nutshell, is "What about Russia?" Is it worth alienating the largest and most militarily powerful state in Europe and the one with the greatest potential to block NATO initiatives, counter NATO interests and generally foment trouble? In my view, the question is not an either/or proposition, as the two positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Clearly, Russia opposes enlargement. But just as clearly, the process will proceed, in some manner and at a pace to be determined, despite Russian objections.

For many, the enlargement discussion is framed by one's view of Russia. On one side of the debate are those who argue that what Russia thinks no longer really matters. Noting that Russia's gross domestic product has contracted to the point where the national economy is roughly the same size as that of Portugal, and that socially and demographically the country is imploding, critics correctly point out that Russia is a one dimensional power,¹⁰ or even more derisively, simply a third world country with nuclear missiles. In this view, Moscow's objections to NATO enlargement should be discounted, because the anticipated negative Russian response would likely occur anyway and in the final analysis, ultimately be of little real consequence.

On the other side of the debate are those ~~that~~ who argue for rapprochement. Adherents of this view maintain that NATO's relations with Russia have deteriorated badly, and that enlargement and Alliance action in Kosovo have been significant contributing factors. In this view, Russia is still the largest and most militarily powerful state in Europe and it is not advantageous or prudent for NATO to ignore her interests. The Alliance should try to avoid needlessly antagonizing Russia and instead seek to rebuild trust and confidence.

The centrist view holds that while Russia is clearly no longer the superpower it once was, it is still a regional force to be reckoned with, and it is in the West's interest to treat Russia with the respect traditionally

¹⁰ See Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Living with Russia." *The National Interest*, Fall 2000.

accorded a great power. All sides generally agree that NATO's actions have occurred against a backdrop of a Russia which is weak and vulnerable politically, economically and militarily and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. The difference in approach involves the question of when Russia might be prepared to make a comeback and to what extent the West should seek to take advantage of the current situation and what the long-term impact of doing so might be.

For this observer, it is difficult to be particularly sanguine about Russia's chances for recovery over the next ten to twenty years. Rather, continued attempts at half-hearted reform and inconclusive muddling through seem the most likely outcome and the prospect of further decline appears to present a greater potential threat to NATO and the West than possible resurgence. Understandably, this view is somewhat at odds with that of many Europeans, and especially those who reside in the CEE region, for whom Russia still looms as a large, important, militarily capable and potentially hostile neighbor.

Some observers have offered an ex post facto argument that all the concern about the possible negative effects of the first round of enlargement were misplaced because Russia acceded to the process and no new dividing lines were drawn across Europe. But this argument loses sight of the fact that the Alliance had to scramble to conclude the NATO-Russia Founding Act with then President Boris Yeltsin in Paris just six weeks prior to the July 1997 summit in Madrid where the decision to invite the three new members was taken. Clearly, enlargement was a big deal, and Russia made a major effort to derail the process. Deep down, Russia probably recognized the inevitability of the enlargement process, but saw little choice other than to oppose it vigorously. Interestingly, from their point of view, subsequent events in Kosovo showed that relations with NATO could go from bad to worse.¹¹

The primary official venue for consultation between NATO and Russia is the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) created by the NATO-Russia Founding Act. The role of the council can and should be strengthened so that Russia feels her voice is heard. Admittedly there is more art than

¹¹ See Alexei G. Arbatov, "The Kosovo Crisis: The End of the Post Cold War Era," Occasional Paper, the Atlantic Council of the United States, March 2000.

science involved in this endeavor, as Russia cannot be permitted to wield a veto over Alliance deliberations. Further, Russia must be serious about engaging in genuine dialogue with NATO. Under President Putin, the Kremlin's position appears to have hardened somewhat, and at times Moscow's representatives seem determined to use the PJC as a forum for thwarting and degrading NATO. But it need not be this way. If both sides are ready and willing, there is room for Russia's role to be broadened and deepened to tap into the true potential of the council as a consultative body.

In the end, ~~I believe~~ (I believe doesn't add any meaning and taking it out depersonalizes the argument) it is possible to square the circle and achieve both improved relations with Russia and an enlarged alliance. Russia desires integration and cooperation with the West, but not at any price. The challenge before us is that we must determine that price.

This can be accomplished through a comprehensive strategy using a measured and incremental approach, building trust and confidence, demonstrating strength and determination when necessary, and including appropriate concessions and compensation along the way.

The trick is to maintain momentum by keeping the door open and encouraging prospective members while at the same time slowing down the process to allow NATO-Russia relations to stabilize and find new equilibrium. The geographic issue of NATO members bordering Russia has already been broached with Poland's accession and can probably be finessed again,¹² although the issue of Kaliningrad could be a sticky one. Except for the Baltic states, NATO will almost certainly not offer membership to former Soviet republics or Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member states. Both sides recognize that these parameters form the general outline of future enlargement, but a great deal of discussion and hard negotiation will be required before it finally takes shape and comes to

¹² Poland and Lithuania border Kaliningrad, Latvia and Estonia border Russia proper. Russia seems to recognize and accept the fact that Kaliningrad will eventually become an island in an EU and NATO sea. Also of interest is the fact that the Baltic States have no formally delineated border with Russia. Negotiations have dragged on largely because Russia does not see the conclusion of a border treaty as in its interest.

fruition. The toughest issues will be timing and how to sweeten the pot to get Russia to go along.

I do not advocate that the Alliance should negotiate future enlargement with Russia; simply that we recognize that enlargement is part of a full panoply of issues on which NATO and Russia must engage and that long term solutions must be found through meaningful dialogue. The bottom line is that enlargement will go forward and Russia can not stop it. Firm determination on NATO's part actually facilitates implementation by convincing Russia to accept a foregone conclusion. This does not mean, however, that it is in the Alliance's interests to cram the issue down Russia's throat. Reasonable accommodation can and must be found, and I believe is eminently possible.

Military Aspects

When NATO accepted in principle the decision to enlarge at the Brussels Summit in January 1994, it committed the Alliance to a long-term process with far reaching consequences, many of which remain unforeseeable. As yet, there is no clear definition of how far NATO will expand or how fast, simply that the process will continue and the door remains open to new members. In many ways, the process is quintessentially political, and military considerations have necessarily taken a back seat. But that does not imply that a serious examination of the military aspects of enlargement is not required, or an otiose exercise of wasted time. Rather, the pros and cons of the military component should be examined in depth alongside the political component before decisions are reached. This way, even if the Alliance determines that the political side takes precedence over the military, it does so with its eyes wide open as to the tradeoffs and possible consequences involved.

Sometimes, disentangling the political component from military considerations is easier said than done. In a larger sense, there appears to be broad consensus within NATO that enlargement enhances long term stability and security in Europe by welcoming CEE states into the western family of nations. There is recognized value in integrating new democracies into the community of nations sharing common goals and values. This in turn fosters stability and enhances security.

Geography and Deployment

Simple geography informs us that the amount of territory under the aegis of NATO's Article 5 common defense clause will likely expand greatly in the next round of enlargement. NATO's frontier will move significantly toward the east, leaving the bulk of its deployable forces hundreds of kilometers to the west. The decision has already been made and the precedent set that there will be no second class membership. New members inherit all the rights and responsibilities of membership when conjoined. This means that they can not be simply left to defend themselves or be covered by air power alone in times of crisis. Since NATO has committed to the principle of no permanent stationing of troops or equipment on the territory of new CEE members, NATO would have to develop a rapid reinforcement capability which currently does not exist.

The opportunity for quickly forward deploying troops and aircraft at air bases in new CEE members offers a decided advantage, but not one without caveats. The Hungarians are fond of claiming Taszar as the first de facto NATO base on CEE territory, and Taszar has in fact been battle tested as both a staging base for operations in Bosnia and as an actual air base during Operation Allied Force. But we should not lose sight of the fact that the United States invested millions of dollars into the Taszar facility to get it up to NATO standards. Similar capital investments would be required at other former Warsaw Pact bases, as almost all are underdeveloped, incompatible and in a general state of disrepair.

Whereas air is the method of choice for rapid reinforcement, it is limited in that the forces that arrive quickly will most likely lack size and staying power. Rail is the preferred method for delivering the kind of heavy forces that may be required to deter aggression or resolve a serious crisis. In December 1996, NATO learned first hand the difficulties of trying to mate the western European and CEE rail systems during an operational deployment. Years of subsequent rotations into Bosnia-Herzegovina and routine use have helped smooth the physical and bureaucratic rough edges off the rail routes through Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. During May of last year, for the first time NATO forces executed a large-scale troop rotation into Kosovo utilizing rail routes through Bulgaria

and Romania. The deployment was an unqualified success, but required a tremendous degree of planning, preparation and coordination. The lesson in all this is that rationalization can be achieved, but it is unwise to wait until a crisis situation has unfolded to start the process. It costs money to prepare obsolescent rail lines for military traffic (ensuring adequate clearance, reinforcing bridges, building new spurs, etc) and systems need to be in place and tested via hands on deployment before heading into an actual crisis.

Many NATO members, including the United States, were stung by criticism concerning their lack of speed and agility in deploying forces into Albania and Kosovo. Significant progress has been made in this area, as the United States Army in Europe has developed and now maintains a quick reaction force for contingency operations. The capability features expandability to larger force packages and versatility ~~through~~ through force enhancement modules. It has been exercised through rapid deployment exercises to new member states such as Hungary. Unfortunately, ~~however~~, this represents only a step in the right direction rather than a solution to the problem, as the capability lacks dedicated lift and so far does not include the participation of allies. Moreover, any comparable allied capability is still years away, despite occasional rhetoric to the contrary regarding achievement of the European Union's headline goals.

Force Design, Force Generation and Power Projection

Almost a decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, CEE countries continue to struggle, with varying degrees of success, to overcome a host of institutional, structural and doctrinal problems endemic to their Warsaw Pact past. Initially, several CEE nations inherited a tank heavy force structure ~~weighted~~ that was primarily located -in the west, designed to function as a component of an overall Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) offensive. This meant that forces had to be redesigned and restationed to reflect a defensive posture of self-sufficiency and all around national defense. There was much work to be done and the majority of CEE nations aspiring to NATO membership have made substantial progress. All have reduced the size of their armed forces considerably. Most have drafted a new national

military strategy and adopted NATO force structure in high level staffing organization and force designation.

But most CEE nations still have a long road ahead of them to achieve full military compatibility with NATO. Virtually all are predominately equipped with aging equipment of Russian manufacture, some nearing the end of its useful service life. Most operate with decaying infrastructure, which limits training and degrades quality of life as well as fostering safety and ecological concerns. Several would like to transition to a professional army, but must continue to rely on conscription and progress is painfully slow. There is no social safety net for trimming the force of deadwood senior officer holdovers from the previous regime and insufficient incentive to recruit and retain talented young officers. Similarly, it has proven extremely difficult to create a viable NCO Corps from scratch.

The primary reason for this state of affairs is that most CEE states have limited funds and too many other competing budget priorities. In an era when the military threat to Europe often seems vague and distant, there is little support for increased defense spending and rapid transformation. Defense spending levels in CEE states tend to mirror those in western Europe, well below the amount required to finish the process of military transformation in anything resembling timely fashion.

Ongoing peacekeeping operations in the Balkans have provided an outstanding opportunity in this regard. The troop to task ratio of ongoing mission requirements places stress on NATO, which CEE nations help relieve by contributing forces. Moreover, the challenge of conducting combined operations on a real world mission provides superb interoperability training and experience.

While NATO experience with the performance of CEE nation military ~~personnel~~ contingents in the Balkans has generally been quite positive, it also has served to highlight a number of deficiencies and limitations. As a rule, CEE nations have contributed what they consider to be their better-trained or elite forces. This does not constitute a sizeable pool of forces from which to draw upon, and there is little pretension that any of them are rapidly deployable. [Further, whereas most would be considered competent military forces, on the ground very

few approach NATO standards in terms of capability, self-sufficiency and initiative.] This sentence is unclear. Why use the adjective "competent" here if your point is that they are not capable?

Interoperability

Considered by some to be the Holy Grail of PfP and NATO-CEE nation engagement, interoperability is a highly subjective and relative term. Obviously, it is desirable to achieve the highest degree of interoperability possible. But it is often useful to ask "interoperable with whom and for what purpose?" NATO has volumes of STANAGs (Standard NATO Agreements) governing everything from blood typing to fuel classification standards. They have proven extremely useful in rationalizing and harmonizing a number of systems, practices and procedures throughout the Alliance. But even with fifty years of experience, there are numerous NATO standards which the majority of NATO nations have failed to meet, in addition to the countless areas where there is no agreed upon standard. Now this ~~doesn't~~ does not mean that CEE nations have no guidelines or identifiable standards to achieve. They must prove compatible with a NATO standard (US, British, French, German) in the absence of anything which could be identified as the NATO standard. Similarly, it does not mean that they must immediately discard all their Russian-made equipment, but it does mean that certain adjustments and allowances must be made, for instance, in the areas of communications, intelligence and logistics compatibility.

Cost is ~~The~~ the bigger question concerning interoperability that needs to be addressed in the context of enlargement. ~~is cost~~. More clarity is required regarding what type and level of interoperability is required and who pays to achieve it. Clearly, the cost is prohibitive for most CEE states. In the case of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, NATO determined that sufficient progress had been made at certain junctures to first extend an invitation to join and begin accession talks, and then to consummate induction. Even still, it is recognized that there is more work to be done and a sponsor nation has been designated for each to help design and execute a training and exercise program that will assist in bringing each new member fully on board at the desired level of NATO capability and compatibility, especially regarding their Article 5 responsibilities. What remains undetermined is

any timetable for implementation and any guidelines for financial assistance toward achieving these goals. Milestone achievement is clearly the responsibility of the individual CEE nation, but some benchmarks will not be attained for a very long time, if ever, without assistance.¹³

Military Criteria

In the end, the military aspects of evaluating a potential candidate's credentials for membership are fairly simple. What is the military contribution of each nation in terms of forces, infrastructure and capability? Can they project force and accept NATO reinforcement? Does NATO wish to accept the Article 5 guarantee to defend them? Would membership enhance or undermine European security?

From a military perspective, potential new central and eastern European members are likely to be net consumers of security for some time to come. This ~~doesn't~~ does not mean that they would not be able to contribute to overall Alliance security, simply that the degree of effort and commitment required by NATO to deliver on key guarantees is not commensurate with their likely contribution. It is certainly conceivable that several CEE states could become net contributors faster if there were consensus in NATO to hasten their transformation through a steady investment of training, funding and effort. But this consensus does not exist, and in the absence of any clear and direct threats to European security, is unlikely to form in the near future. Moreover, the current broad gap between rhetoric (stated requirements) and commitment (funded requirements) is likely to remain.

NATO need not continue enlargement to remain relevant. And from a purely military standpoint, it does not seem a very efficacious or cost effective deal, at least in the short term. But NATO is publicly committed to the process and there are long term advantages to be gained from an expanded alliance featuring economically healthy and militarily competent and compatible allies in central and eastern Europe. Moreover, it is important to consider the

¹³ Moreover, nations do not always spend the available funding wisely. For largely domestic political reasons, this year the Czech Republic spent three-fourths of its military procurement budget on 72 Aero Vodochody L-159 light combat aircraft, an extremely ill-advised expenditure from an Alliance perspective.

possible negative repercussions of failure to formally bring CEE nations into the community of western nations. When coupled with the likely political-military benefits, it is apparent the process will move forward.

~~In my view,~~ There are clear security benefits to be gained by enlargement, and the process should continue to move forward. But this does not imply any need to rush ~~in~~ the pace in terms of enlargement. ~~of timing or the number of candidates invited in the next round.~~ New military obligations become effective immediately upon joining and the corresponding capability to contribute meaningfully to the overall security environment is years away for most CEE states. Ironically, the same Balkan commitments which enhance our interoperability simultaneously consume the bulk of the funding which might otherwise be available to speed the process of transformation and hasten the day when CEE nations could more meaningfully contribute.

The Candidates

In official circles, there is an understandable tendency to avoid specificity concerning enlargement, eschewing any formal delineation of accession criteria or open assessment of a given candidate's status and progress toward membership. The process is highly politicized and many candidate nations are extremely attuned to any possible negative feedback. Fortunately however, there is no requirement to hew to diplomatic sensitivities in an independent academic discussion of the various candidates' prospects, and I think such a discussion would make a useful contribution to enhancing informed debate.

At the Washington Summit in April 1999, the Alliance introduced the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as a way ~~of~~ to ~~evaluateing and tracking~~ the progress of candidate nations toward membership. It was designed to put more rigor into the assessment process through ~~increased clarity of~~ clearer membership criteria and to incorporate lessons learned from the accession process during the first round of enlargement. At the same time, it aimed to demonstrate to the remaining aspirants that NATO's Article 10 pledge to keep the door open was genuine. Requiring the submission of a tailored national plan and entailing an individualized annual review of status and progress across a wide array of political, economic, defense, resource, security and legal criteria for membership, the MAP process provides a solid

feedback loop for two way communication, and not unlike PfP before it, has already successfully evolved into a mature and effective tool of engagement well beyond what was originally envisioned.

Unfortunately however, in the view of many of the aspirant countries, it has also come to be seen as the definitive set of criteria for NATO membership, much as the European Union's far more technical and detailed criteria form the *acquis communautaire* for EU membership. This misperception will likely complicate the Alliance's deliberations, because while the MAP provides a useful and relatively objective basis for evaluation, the actual decision of which candidate nations to invite to begin accession will more likely be driven by broader strategic considerations, including internal Alliance politics. Consequently, in the following discussion I have tried to provide a thumbnail sketch of the prospective candidates in this vein.

Tiny Slovenia is an excellent candidate. Many observers felt Slovenia met all the criteria to begin accession during the last round, but was left on the table to ensure a viable candidate for subsequent enlargement. With a population of under two million and total strength in the armed forces well under 10,000, there is little expectation that Slovenia would provide any significant military contribution to NATO.¹⁴ However, from a political standpoint, Slovenia has been a model CEE country. Deftly sidestepping the Balkan wars that engulfed its neighbors, it quickly transitioned to a market economy and largely pays its own way to participate in PfP and MAP activities. Among CEE nations, Slovenia trails only Hungary and the Czech Republic in the amount of annual foreign investment. Moreover, Slovenia has firmly established democratic institutions and processes and there is strong domestic support for joining the Alliance. Slovenia actively participates in trilateral cooperation with Italy and Hungary and membership would provide a land bridge to Hungary, currently a NATO island sharing no borders with fellow members. There are no lingering historic issues of import with neighbors and several western European nations, including Italy and Germany, would likely be willing to sponsor Slovenian membership with guidance and assistance.

¹⁴ This is not unprecedented or even unusual. Compare Slovenia with current members Luxembourg, whose tiny forces form essentially a constabulary guard, or Iceland, which has no armed forces at all.

Slovakia is also an excellent candidate, but has been forced to make up for lost time wasted by the Meciar regime from 1993 to 1998. Despite the late start on reform, democracy now seems to have firmly taken hold and austerity measures have begun to pay dividends in terms of economic growth and foreign investment.¹⁵ Militarily, Slovakia has small but competent armed forces. The military is the most respected institution in the country and over 70% of the population favor joining NATO. Defense reform is similarly about five years behind, but Slovakia aims to provide a rapid reaction battalion and a squadron of Mig-29s as its primary contribution to NATO.

Slovakia's biggest drawbacks are its recent arrival into the group of nominally ready candidates and the sometimes less than sensitive treatment of its ethnic Hungarian minority. Hungary is an ardent supporter of Slovakian membership however, and like Slovenia, Slovakian candidacy is likely to engender strong support among a number of western European nations, including Germany. Slovakia is surrounded on three sides by NATO territory and is the most compelling candidate after Slovenia for advocates of a small and non-provocative approach to the next round of enlargement.

Bulgaria is another late starter on reform, but has made slow and steady progress and is a natural for membership in due time. Famously western-oriented in its outlook and aspirations, Bulgaria has distanced itself from Russia and renounced its territorial claims on Macedonia. The change in regime in Belgrade should help reopen the Danube and restore trade in the region, facilitating Bulgaria's economic growth and ability to make faster progress in defense transition and reform.

Unlike Hungary and the Czech Republic, Bulgaria enjoys popular support for the military and spends comparatively more on defense. Over 60% percent of the population support joining NATO. Bulgaria actively supported the Alliance during the air war over Kosovo, most notably by denying Russia transit rights and by downplaying the political impact of errant NATO missiles which inadvertently struck Bulgarian soil.

¹⁵ For instance, see "Globalization to the Rescue," *The Economist*, 17 February 2001, p. 66.

There are three primary hurdles to an invitation for Bulgaria to begin the accession process this time around. They are: respectable but unimpressive credentials, perhaps indicating a need for more time, the lack of a large NATO patron to passionately advocate Bulgarian membership, and the psychological tendency to link Bulgaria together with Romania as a matched set, which may or may not work to Bulgaria's advantage.

Romania is another natural for eventual membership, but has made little forward progress and continues to struggle. Ion Iliescu, who ruled the country from 1989 to 1996 and did little to reform the nation's economy or tackle corruption, ~~was recently~~ returned to power in 2000.¹⁶ This electoral result was an indictment of the poor performance of the center right coalition elected in 1996. Its economic record was dismal. External and domestic debt increased, inflation rose to over 40%, and unemployment doubled to 12%. Perhaps worst of all, the economy shrank 3.2% in 1999 and rebounded only slightly in 2000. [Little progress has been made in weeding out widespread corruption. Romania's reputation abroad is poor, and according to polls, most Romanians believe they are worse off today than they were before communism collapsed 12 years ago.¹⁷] (In what aspect is Romania's reputation abroad poor - political?)

Not surprisingly, the lack of effective political leadership has affected ~~impacted~~ (some purists will argue that impact is not a verb) the pace of military reform as well. The Romanian armed forces have downsized significantly, but have done so without much apparent purpose or direction. Romania has lagged behind its CEE counterparts in formulating coherent doctrine and strategic concepts for transformation. The officer corps remains extremely top heavy with deadwood holdovers from the old regime and the Romanian military suffers from a host of shortcomings endemic to its Warsaw Pact past.

On the positive side, Romania showed responsible behavior during the air war and appears to be making progress in the treatment of its sizeable ethnic Hungarian minority in Transylvania. Romania also enjoys a strong proponent in France, which pushed for Romania's inclusion

¹⁶ "Gulp," *The Economist*, 16 December 2000, pp. 56-57.

¹⁷ "Disillusion's Once-rejected Heir," *The Economist*, 10 June 2000, p. 57.

during the first round of enlargement, and presumably would do so again this time around. A seemingly minor but potentially significant drawback to Romania's candidacy is its insistence on adopting a public stance of official bravado, touting its fine credentials for membership despite the available evidence to the contrary. Many Europeans find this approach a bit unseemly, and it will probably not serve Romania well during the critical phase of consensus building among current Alliance members.

In many ways, Albania is a success story of sorts. The last round of national elections was free and fair, and the country successfully absorbed half a million Kosovar refugees during the air war. (was this absorption temporary or permanent - clarify) Led by the pro-western, though largely ex-communist, government of Ilir Meta, the economy grew an estimated 8% last year and the future seems to be looking up for the first time in a long time. But relative progress is a reflection of how far behind Albania started, and remains, behind the other CEE countries. It would be a big stretch to say that democratic institutions and processes have been firmly established, or even that the country is entirely stable. The country remains awash with guns from the 1997 financial crisis, when pyramidal investment schemes collapsed, leading to widespread unrest and the looting of national armories. Smuggling still flourishes, including drug and arms trafficking, and accounts for a significant portion of economic activity. Poverty is pervasive and corruption remains rife. The military is just beginning to undertake meaningful reform.

The Alliance appreciates the role Albania played during the Kosovo crisis and the restrained stance it ~~is taking~~ now has taken toward ethnic Albanian extremists fomenting violence and revolution in Serbia and Macedonia. NATO wishes to encourage Albania's further progress, but it simply is not yet a serious candidate for consideration during this round of enlargement.

A similar assessment could be made of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). By cleverly inviting in United Nations Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) forces, FYROM has managed to stay on the sidelines during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. A moderate, pragmatic approach to politics, defense and economics has resulted in relative stability and prosperity. Last year the government peacefully changed hands between the former communists and

the center right coalition of President Trajkovski. With Milosevic gone, FYROM has good relations with all its neighbors, including Greece, where the row over names and symbols seems to have abated. There is a strong tradition of cooperation and coexistence between FYROM's minority ethnic Albanian population and the majority ethnically Slavic Macedonians which weathered the ~~recent~~_____ (fill in season) 2001 crisis, but is likely to be seriously tested again. Inflation has been brought under control and the government even enjoys a budget surplus.

The major threat to Macedonian peace and stability is posed by ethnic Albanian extremists operating out of Kosovo who wish to gain independence and form a greater Albania at FYROM's and Serbia's expense. ~~With approximately one third of the population,~~ Ethnic Albanians, who have been historically underrepresented in positions of power, make up approximately one third of the population. Furthermore, ethnic Albanians ~~and authority and~~ currently suffer from an unemployment rate somewhere between 32% (official government figure) and 60% (independent estimates). Moreover, the ethnic Albanian population is concentrated in the northwestern portion of the country, abutting Kosovo. Most problematic however, is the sorry state of FYROM's armed forces. Left with truncated structure and little operational equipment by the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Macedonian armed forces essentially constitute an undermanned and ill-equipped internal security force which is ~~will be~~ hard pressed to effectively deal with incursions by guerilla forces hardened by years of fighting, even when supported with NATO assistance. The Alliance has abiding interests in helping avert the spread of Balkan conflict and instability to FYROM, but it is clearly premature to begin any serious discussion of FYROM as a candidate to be invited to begin accession talks during this round of enlargement.

By far the most contentious issue in the context of enlargement is the future of the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. All three have firmly established democratic institutions and processes, and when viewed from virtually any standpoint - political, economic, cultural, or historic - clearly belong in the West. Each has installed a younger generation of leadership in power and they all share the common foreign policy goals of joining NATO and the EU and avoiding harassment and intimidation by Russia.

With a population of only 1.5 million, tiny Estonia is the smallest CEE nation and leads the pack in market transformation. The economy is growing at a rate of around 7% a year. Inflation and taxes are low, foreign investment is high, and significant progress has been made in privatization. In 1998, Estonia became the first Baltic state to begin accession negotiations with the EU and in terms of economic performance and compliance, is probably the leading CEE candidate nation today.

Latvia has also done extremely well, but the results are not nearly as impressive as those of its neighbor to the north. One likely reason is the fact that in _____ (put date) ~~recently~~ Latvia installed its ninth government in ten years. On the positive side, it could be argued that this revolving door approach to politics is no different than in Italy, and Latvia has carried out the multiple transitions smoothly and without much fanfare. However, it seems intuitive that such frequent governmental shuffling can not be conducive to strong or effective leadership over the long term.

Lithuania, with a population of 3.7 million, has also made significant progress. Economic performance and the level of foreign investment lags behind that of its Baltic counterparts, but along with Latvia, Lithuania was able to begin accession talks with the EU last year. As the largest Baltic state, Lithuania also has the largest armed forces, with the 3600-troop, six battalion "Iron Wolf" Brigade forming the core of its ground forces.

The major obstacle to inviting the Baltic States to begin the accession process to join NATO at the Prague Summit is Russia. Russia objects to enlargement in general, but is particularly vehement in its opposition to Baltic accession. Russia feels a historic and cultural connection with this area that far exceeds its claims over central and eastern Europe. The latter are viewed as independent sovereign states which Russia came to dominate by virtue of its size, position and power. In contrast, the former are more often viewed as part of Russia itself.

Complicating this relationship is the substantial minority of ethnic Russians living in the Baltic States, which Russia feels are being victimized by discriminatory laws and statute. The sense of indignation and outrage at

the treatment of ethnic Russians is particularly acute in Latvia, where ethnic minorities (Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarussians) comprise 44% of the population and Latvians are outnumbered in their seven biggest cities. Policies that Latvians view as critical to preserving a language and culture almost wiped out by over forty years of Soviet domination are seen by Russians as not only unnecessarily strict, but also applied with needlessly fulsome vigor.¹⁸

It is easy to forget that during the collapse of the Soviet Union, one of the few places where military force was applied was in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. Although ultimately unsuccessful, it highlights the different approach Russia takes toward the Baltics and the increased potential for future crisis if mishandled.

Viewed dispassionately, the Baltic States are qualified now politically and will likely never make much more than a modest contribution militarily. Their premier NATO designated force, the combined Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT), is heavily dependent on external support and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. So the heart of the matter comes down to the Alliance's preferred approach to dealing with Russia's sensibilities, and certain allies, such as Germany, have preliminarily signaled that they prefer not to needlessly antagonize Moscow.

Strategies and Possible Outcomes

As outlined above in the discussion on enlargement options, it is my belief that the Alliance should, barring a major international crisis or geostrategic upheaval, utilize the Prague Summit to invite one or more aspirants to begin accession negotiations, aiming toward membership in 2005 or 2006. For the purposes of this discussion, it is conceptually useful to categorize the nine official candidates into three broad groups: the two Balkan candidates, Albania and FYROM; the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; and the four in the center, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.

As previously discussed, at this juncture the two Balkan candidates are not yet ready for serious consideration. There appears to be consensus within the

¹⁸ See Sharon LaFraniere, "In Latvia, Officials Wage War of Words," *The Washington Post*, 11 March 2001, p. 18.

Alliance that both are making tangible progress, but also that both remain a fair distance away from the point where they are ready for NATO to extend an invitation to begin accession. NATO's continued involvement in the region, especially in countering ethnic Albanian extremist insurgency in Macedonia, may serve to draw the two of them, and particularly FYROM, closer to NATO over the long term, but is unlikely to create momentum in the near term for a call to accelerate the timing of an invitation of membership. On the contrary, NATO's somewhat tentative response during the recent crisis indicates a reluctance in many western capitals to become more deeply involved in still another long-term Balkan commitment.

The question of whether or not to invite the Baltic States is easily the most contentious on the enlargement agenda. There is clear consensus within the Alliance that all three belong in NATO and will be invited to join at some point, but just as clearly, there is no consensus on the advisability of doing so during the next round. Nordic members Norway and Denmark are likely to advocate early accession for the Baltic states, whereas certain other allies, such as Germany, see no need to rush and would prefer to defer action so as not to antagonize Russia. Both sides of the debate have merit, and the United States most likely can not straddle the fence on this issue. Either way, I would argue that two guiding principles should apply. First, whenever NATO determines that the appropriate time has come, bringing all three on board at once is the only viable option. Attempting to discriminate between them by staggering accession makes little sense. It would needlessly prolong the process, creating unhealthy and unnecessary political pressure on the ones that must wait, and it would open the door for jealousy and rivalry between them that Russia would surely seek to exploit to its advantage. In addition, NATO has actively encouraged a number of inter-Baltic cooperative initiatives¹⁹ and it would be highly inefficient, if not outright damaging to reverse course at this juncture. Second, the key operative principle to keep in mind regarding Baltic accession is inevitability. NATO must clearly signal to Russia and the world that the Baltic states will be invited to join the Alliance, the only question is when. This requires considerable lead-time from decision to execution to form consensus and build the political will to stay the course,

¹⁹ For instance, the Baltic Battalion, the Baltic Defense College and perhaps most importantly, the BALTNET integrated air defense system.

so when the actual invitation is extended, it is almost anticlimactic. Precisely the wrong approach would be to wait until just before the summit to begin consultation, reaching a last minute decision which maximizes the element of surprise and the potential for undesirable negative fallout.

My personal view is that the Alliance should pass on Baltic membership this time, and begin to lay the political foundation both within NATO and external to the Alliance to invite the Baltic states at a future summit. Intuitively, this would probably involve an invitation to begin accession negotiations in the 2004-2006 time frame, with membership coming sometime 2007 to 2010 as the desired end state. The primary advantage of this course of action would be to avoid the geostrategic indigestion of the big bang approach, enlarging incrementally and allowing time to form the political consensus and will to implement a Baltic enlargement strategy of slow inevitability. Such an approach would achieve Alliance goals while minimizing risk.

There are other advantages as well. First, it would leave viable aspirants on the table for the next round, so there is no perceived need to pause the process for want of qualified candidates. Second, it helps maintain the momentum and integrity of the process while other candidates which require more time to get ready do so. Third, if handled properly, Russia might find itself going through the motions of opposition to Baltic accession while becoming increasingly enmeshed in the political and economic benefits of Baltic inclusion in the West, which increasingly manifest themselves in localized prosperity and parallel progress toward EU membership. Lastly, it delays the inevitable discussion of where and when will the Alliance be finished expanding. That question is one which must be addressed at some point, entailing healthy and necessary debate, but not one which must be definitively answered just yet.

The four remaining candidates present a number of possibilities. Invitations could be proffered for them all to come at once, in pairs, or one at a time as each meets the accession criteria. As discussed above, Slovenia is the leading candidate, followed at a distance by Slovakia. Both, however, solidly meet the set of standards and criteria presented to aspirant countries during previous

rounds of enlargement, including the most recent. If the Alliance wishes to maintain momentum by inviting someone to begin accession this round, and bringing aboard more than just one country offers better symmetry and makes more sense, then these two are the natural selections. The so-called "Two Slovs" or "Slov Squared" variant is extremely attractive, as it represents a sober, middle of the road approach which meets Alliance goals while minimizing risk.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this discussion for all concerned will be facing the awkward truth that Romania isn't ready and isn't making much measurable progress. France championed Romania's inclusion during the last round, and presumably will push Romania's candidacy again this time. Unfortunately this is likely to create a sense of quid pro quo among NATO countries in supporting various candidates for membership, when in the case of Romania, at present the correct answer is clearly "no." A reasonable argument could be made for Bulgarian inclusion this round, although I would argue that the Bulgarians would benefit from more time to strengthen their credentials. Of far greater import, however, would be the impact of an Alliance decision to extend Bulgaria an invitation while leaving Romania at the altar. In virtually any enlargement scenario, NATO will be faced with the difficult mission of managing the disappointment of rejected candidates, some of which have been involved in the process from the beginning.²⁰ It would be unwise to needlessly exacerbate the political fallout by extending an invitation to Bulgaria while snubbing Romania.

One option would be to bring in all four, but that is not the right answer. An invitation to Romania during this round would make a mockery of the entire enlargement process, undermining Alliance credibility by ignoring established standards and procedures. Further, it would imply a Russian veto over Baltic accession and make the Baltic states look like prisoners of a deeply flawed, if not inherently arbitrary and unfair process.

The best course, both politically and ethically, is to enforce the existing standards. This means Bulgaria must wait a bit longer until it clearly meets all the established criteria and Romania must get its act together.

²⁰ Romania is proud of the fact that it was the first nation to join PFP in 1994.

To do otherwise would result in a steep cost in terms of Alliance credibility.

Given these parameters, perhaps the greatest challenge facing the Alliance during the next round of enlargement will be disappointment management. NATO must work the field hard to ensure that candidates who are not included this time around understand why and are able to maintain political will and momentum to continue forward movement so as to meet the criteria for an invitation at a future summit. For the majority of candidates, this is a reasonable and attainable expectation. Most are making measurable progress, and with continued effort, it is only a matter of time before they meet the criteria and reach the desired goal. Romania could prove a special challenge in this regard however, as there the gap between expectations and reality is significant.

NATO must continue to seek ways to broaden and deepen engagement throughout the region to create the conditions for success. This includes continuing to refine the MAP process, utilizing the full potential of PfP, and seeking new ways to enhance dialogue and cooperation. Whether or not all nine aspirant nations eventually achieve their ultimate goal of NATO membership, it is in the Alliance's interests to aid and assist their further progress toward that end.

My recommendation for the upcoming summit is to opt for a small and non-provocative approach, utilizing the "Slov Squared" variant. Such an approach maintains momentum and keeps the door open, validating NATO's Article 10 pledge. It avoids the loss of credibility that a pause would entail and the geostrategic indigestion that a big bang approach would likely induce. It maintains the integrity of the process by inviting only clearly qualified candidates to begin accession and reinforces the established standards for future aspirants. Most importantly, it best meets Alliance goals overall while minimizing risk.

EU ENLARGEMENT

The 1957 Rome Treaty created the European Union with six original members. Membership now stands at 15, with

preparations to add as many as 13 new members underway.²¹ Originally conceived as a means to foster better coordination and cooperation in economic and social policy across member states, the EU has grown and evolved, and now functions as the primary venue through which European integration is pursued. Throughout its history, the EU has steadily shepherded forward the process of European integration in the political and economic sphere, but until recently, not in the realm of security and defense.

This does not mean, however, that the current effort to create a stronger and more independent European component of the region's defense capability sprung forth without antecedent. For decades, there has been discussion within the EU about moving toward greater coordination and integration of security and defense policy. Genuine progress was inhibited, however, by two primary factors. First, the sheer scope of the omnipresent Soviet threat dictated European reliance on Washington for effective deterrence from both a nuclear and conventional standpoint, and second, the unwillingness of the United Kingdom to support any independent European defense initiative which might undermine NATO.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, one of these inhibiting factors was removed, and the allies began to look at ways NATO could accommodate a stronger European security and defense identity (ESDI) within the Alliance. NATO involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina provided a catalyst for movement in this direction, and during the 1996 -1997 time frame, there were very serious discussions about France rejoining NATO's integrated military command and the establishment of a distinctly European security and defense identity within NATO. In the end, the French concept of what ESDI should be proved more independent than what other allies envisioned and the price of French readmission to the integrated command structure was judged too high. The ESDI discussion was tabled and languished in relative obscurity.²²

²¹ In 1998 the EU began accession negotiations with six countries: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. In 2000, the accession process began with six more: Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Slovakia. This year Turkey entered the process as the 13th candidate.

²² See "A France Bites Dog Story," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1996, p. 9.

The next major catalyst which provided renewed impetus to the concept of greater European autonomy in defense and security matters was Operation Allied Force, the air war over Kosovo and Serbia. The air campaign highlighted the vast disparity between European and American military capabilities, especially in high technology competencies. From a European perspective, the military deficiencies were not only embarrassing, they heralded the potential for far more serious consequences such as significantly reduced political clout and less ability to shape future crises and influence the policy and actions of the United States. Of particular importance was the resulting sea change in the United Kingdom's position. In British Prime Minister Tony Blair's assessment, the air campaign was a wake up call for Europe, and he reversed his government's long standing opposition to the EU's involvement in defense and security matters, removing the second historic inhibitor. In December 1998 at St. Malo, the United Kingdom and France formalized the shift by issuing a joint statement pledging support for the development of a formalized EU defense role.²³

Since the St. Malo declaration, the EU has moved forward rapidly in creating a separate European security and defense policy (ESDP), at least in concept and on a declaratory level. At its Cologne Summit in June 1999, the EU leadership resolved to "give the European Union the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities regarding a common European policy on security and defense... To this end, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO."²⁴ In October, the EU underlined the seriousness of its intent by putting a seasoned NATO veteran in charge of overseeing the program, naming former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana as High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. At the Helsinki Summit later the same year, the EU reiterated its determination to "to develop an autonomous capacity to take decision," but was far more circumspect in carefully delineating its aims so as not to create the

²³ *Joint Declaration on European Defence*, Franco-British Summit, St. Malo, 4 December 1998.

²⁴ *European Council Declaration on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence*, Presidency Conclusions, Cologne European Council, 3-4 June 1999.

appearance of potentially undermining NATO. The final communiqué stated that the EU would launch and conduct military operations in response to international crises "where NATO as a whole is not engaged," and provided the caveat, "the process will avoid unnecessary duplication and does not imply the creation of a European army." At Helsinki, the EU also set itself the headline goal of being able, by 2003, to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least a year a military force of up to 60,000 capable of the full range of Petersburg tasks (humanitarian aid, search and rescue, peacekeeping and the use of combat forces in crisis management, including a certain degree of peace enforcement).²⁵

In 2000 the EU maintained momentum by establishing the institutional mechanisms to formulate and administer ESDP both within the EU and between the EU and NATO. The first formal meeting of the EU's interim Political and Security Committee and NATO's Permanent Council took place at EU Council Headquarters in September. A variety of working groups were convened to discuss a number of salient issues, such as force capabilities, arrangements for EU access to NATO assets, and the permanent provision of a forum for EU-NATO consultations. Probably the most significant step taken to date occurred at the Brussels Capabilities Commitment Conference in November, where EU members pledged asset and troop contributions to the EU's Rapid Reaction Force. Union members did not evince any real difficulty in meeting force contribution goals, but then most were simply dual-hatting existing forces already committed to NATO. For political expediency, the EU also set aside any serious discussion of the far thornier issues of establishing a means of command and control, strategic lift and transport, intelligence gathering and sharing, and logistics.²⁶

U.S. Reactions

Not surprisingly, initial reactions from the other side of the Atlantic were somewhat less than sanguine concerning both the advisability and efficacy of the ESDP effort. American reservations and concerns were

²⁵ *European Council Declaration on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence*, Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999.

²⁶ *Declaration of the Military Capabilities Commitment Conference of the European Union*, Brussels, 20 November 2000, and "Meet Your New European Army," *The Economist*, 25 November 2000, pp. 55-61.

encapsulated by the "three D's" of what ESDP should not be. First, it should not weaken the transatlantic link by *decoupling* the United States and Europe. Second, it should not compete with NATO by *duplicating* the Alliance in terms of capabilities (planning, crisis management) or function (Article 5 warfighting). And lastly, it should not undermine overall European security by *discriminating* against non-EU members, especially the six non-EU members of NATO.²⁷ Seeking to soften the political tone, the United States later recast its objections in more positive terms, utilizing the "three I's" of what ESDP should be. The first was *indivisibility*, emphasizing the enduring nature of the transatlantic link and reaffirming that NATO and the EU are complementary organizations seeking similar goals, and are not in competition. The second was *improvement*, meaning ESDP should be all about enhancing European military capability and not simply a means by which new and redundant decision-making bureaucracy is created. The third was *inclusiveness*, meaning the EU must find a way for non-EU members to be included in the process.²⁸

At the December 2000 NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels, outgoing Secretary of Defense William Cohen delivered an unexpectedly sharp address to his NATO counterparts, 11 of whom hold dual membership in the European Union.²⁹ He warned that an ill-conceived EU defense initiative could reduce NATO to "a relic of the past," and that Americans might become disenchanted with the Alliance if Europeans were perceived to be "paying lip service" to achieving increased defense spending and improved capabilities. Further, he stated that a properly managed program - concentrating on high end capability and increased defense budgets, rather than new institutions and added bureaucracy - was not only desirable, but urgently necessary.³⁰

Transatlantic Dialogue

²⁷ The Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Turkey.

²⁸ Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at the December 1998 NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels. For a review of American responses, see Stanley Sloan, "The United States and European Defence," *Chaillot Paper*, number 39.

²⁹ Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

³⁰ Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen at the December 2000 NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels.

Traditionally, the tacit transatlantic understanding has been that in economic affairs, the United States and Europe would deal with one another roughly as equals, but in defense and security matters, the Europeans would (sometimes reluctantly) follow America's lead. That dynamic is now changing, albeit slowly, and this is a healthy, if sometimes uncertain and unsettling process.

The United States always has the option of acting unilaterally - it prefers to act in concert with allies and with UN approval, but it has the option to go it alone if need be. In contrast, Europeans have no other choice than to act multilaterally, so naturally they tend to think in terms of collective consultation and joint action and to elevate the principle higher. They feel this approach has wrought success, so they find it disconcerting when the U.S. looks like it may choose to act alone. In addition, Europeans tend to adopt a somewhat parochial Euro-centric world view, failing to take into consideration the global responsibilities and commitments of the United States. Transatlantic understanding would be enhanced if Europeans would consciously strive to adopt a more global perspective, even if they only act regionally.

The Europeans argue that the American position is fundamentally schizophrenic. The U.S. constantly urges Europe to pull its own weight, but reacts with alarm when Europeans undertake any concrete initiatives to do so. Further, they wish to have a more equal voice in determining collective policy. They do not see their role as simply providing the checkbook and rubber stamping policy produced in Washington.

For its part, the United States should recognize the powerful impetus toward integration in foreign and security policy created by European monetary union. The introduction of the Euro is a seminal event which symbolizes remarkable achievement in economic integration, but also highlights the relative lack of progress in developing comparable Pan-European foreign and security policy. Politically, the Europeans must demonstrate forward progress. Also, the U.S. should understand that there is a large component of defense economics to ESDP. Europe is attempting to restructure its defense industry for greater efficiency in an effort to be more competitive with the U.S. Equally important, Washington should also recognize the global resonance of the term hyperpuissance (hyperpower), coined

by French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, when used in reference to the United States. Although not necessarily pejorative by itself, the term implies a view of the world's only remaining superpower as overly arrogant and inclined toward unilateralism.

The Europeans, in turn, must recognize that there is no free ride in defense and security. There is a direct correlation between military contributions and capabilities and the commensurate political clout to shape and influence collective policy. Throughout the 1990s, a majority of EU members have cashed in their peace dividend by limiting defense expenditures and diverting the money to bolster other areas and meet tight economic targets for the launch of the single currency. After years of neglect, 8 of the 11 EU members of NATO have told the Alliance that this year they plan to increase defense spending in real terms, although the expected increases will likely be small. France and Germany are not among them.³¹

Further, the money that is allocated for defense must be spent wisely. Concern over the growing gap in capabilities led the Alliance to launch the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) at the April 1999 Washington Summit. Covering the full range of future contingencies, up to and including Article 5 high intensity warfighting, DCI is seen by Washington as a means of bringing European capabilities closer to the U.S. across a broad spectrum of possible conflict. Unfortunately, to date progress among the allies toward meeting the 58 DCI goals has been uneven at best.

Regarding the motivations behind DCI and the EU's headline goal, it must be said that the two are different and potentially in conflict. In essence, the headline goal focuses on lower end tasks³² and creates a new entity on paper only. Critics argue that the last thing Europe needs is another Corps with inadequate training, cohesion, equipment, firepower and lift.

European preoccupation with meeting the headline goal also points toward a growing de facto division of labor

³¹ "A Long March," *The Economist*, 17 February 2001, p. 54.

³² There is disagreement on this point within the EU. France argues that the head line goal serves as a stepping stone toward full spectrum capability, whereas other members, notably Sweden, believe its purpose is limited to fulfilling (largely low end) Petersburg tasks.

between the United States and Europe. While this may seem conceptually convenient in the short term, allowing such a gap to become a permanent state of affairs entails a number of highly corrosive and damaging effects over the long term. Assigning the Europeans to conduct low end peacekeeping tasks in Europe while the United States handles high end warfighting tasks elsewhere around the globe results in highly disproportionate sharing of burdens and risks, and over time creates a sense of junior partnership among allies. This is not a long term prescription for success.

The good news is there may be greater incentive for European governments to spend on enhanced military capability regarded as purely European.³³ If European parliaments are willing to allocate additional funding to support European initiatives to enhance European combined military capability to resolve problems on their own doorstep, such as crises in the Balkans and the Mediterranean rim, then ESDP will have been a resounding success.

Western European Views

Clearly, France has the most expansive vision of where ESDP should go. The French view 2003 as merely a first step on the path to broader capabilities with the Rapid Reaction Force forming the embryonic base of a future European army which will eventually act as the military arm of an independent European foreign and security policy.

As previously discussed, the United Kingdom is the pivotal player on the European side. In the aftermath of the air war, the British were convinced that Europe had to do better and had to do it collectively. They felt it best to try and corral fellow European nations on their own, without the context of NATO cover and U.S. military capability to underwrite European shortcomings. They knew they had to enlist French participation and support, and felt that the risk of importing an excessively anti-U.S. bias from the French was an acceptable and manageable risk. At the December 2000 EU Summit in Nice, the British emphasized their limited view of the role of the Rapid Reaction Force in an attempt to contain rising expectations and underscore their position that the new force is intended to complement NATO, not undermine it.

³³ For instance, the multinational European effort on the Airbus 300.

Germany, by virtue of its size and wealth, is key to the success of any EU defense initiative. But, for the first time in its history, Germany is surrounded by allies and enjoys a close relationship with the world's only remaining superpower. Against this background, last year Germany spent only DM 45.3 billion (\$21.8 billion) on defense, well under 2% of GDP, and projections for future spending remain flat.³⁴ Germany's attitude toward ESDP is ambivalent. Rhetorically, Germany offers its full support, but the tightly drawn purse strings send an entirely different message.

Many smaller nations are also unsure of which way to go with ESDP and may or may not follow Germany's lead. Many enjoy the allure of increased autonomy, but not at the price of significantly increased defense spending or strained relations with the United States. Also, many are not eager to hand over a bigger say in defense policy to their larger EU neighbors. The current arrangement under NATO, dominated by a relatively distant and often inattentive superpower, is preferable to one where historic continental powers rule the roost and take a more active role in dictating collective policy which affects all members.

CEE Perceptions

In the early 1990s, there was clear consensus among the CEE states that EU membership was desirable primarily for the economic benefits, but not even considered as an option for security. Economic prosperity would be enhanced by EU membership, but could be achieved without it. In contrast, there was no substitute for NATO membership to ensure overall security.

Now a generally more sophisticated view of the EU is prevalent, where the long term benefits of stability and prosperity are seen as enhancing overall security in a broader sense. Attaining membership in the EU is now seen as a parallel, rather than subsequent path, but still is no substitute for NATO. The advent of ESDP is seen as generally positive if it results in genuinely enhanced European defense capability, but no CEE nation wants to see NATO's role eroded or the transatlantic link to the U.S.

³⁴ "Broken Taboos - Germany Debates Future of Bundeswehr," *Armed Forces Journal International*, June 2000, pp. 76-80.

weakened. They realize that it will be years, if ever, before a bona fide independent European military capability comes on line that is capable of guaranteeing their security. That is the number one reason they seek NATO membership in the first place - the article 5 guarantee underwritten by U.S. military power - and nothing else will suffice.

At present, only three CEE states have attained NATO membership. None are in the EU and it will be at least a couple more years before the first CEE country is admitted. For purely practical reasons, it is not difficult to understand why CEE nations are particularly reluctant to embrace the idea that someday the EU will take care of their defense needs. Even if this were the case, they are no more ready to make the long term commitment to increase defense spending to the level necessary to transform rhetoric into reality than their western European neighbors.

The CEE states tend to see ESDP, DCI, EU enlargement, NATO enlargement, Russia, missile defense, peacekeeping, and burden sharing as all interrelated. For them, living in the shadow of the former Soviet Union, continued American involvement in Europe is key to their future and the Article 5 guarantee forms the bedrock of NATO. Several CEE countries, including the Visegrad four and most notably Romania, have openly (and bluntly) stated that the EU's promise of future military capability under ESDP is no substitute for NATO membership. So they will likely provide the requisite amount of public support for ESDP while continuing to pursue their original goals.

Prospects

Clearly, at its core, ESDP is as much psychological as it is substantive. But just as clearly, there is consensus that the main goal for the near term is to increase European defense capability without undermining NATO.

Naturally, the United States supports a stronger Europe that contributes more to its own defense, but has made it clear that the resulting effort can not undermine NATO or weaken the transatlantic link. The U.S. has generally adopted a cautious, "wait and see" attitude, but the current administration appears less confident than its predecessor that the secondary and tertiary effects of ESDP

can be contained within harmless limits. For the moment, American interests are probably best served by remaining engaged and attentive, but for the most part simply letting nature take its course.

The greater risk is that the EU's new defense effort will damage NATO not by succeeding too well, but by falling well short of its goals. The difficulty will lie in maintaining momentum and managing expectations. It is likely Europe won't spend enough on defense and will not spend what it does allocate with sufficient prudence or efficiency to effect a positive change in capability. Granted, the underlying political motivation to spend enough to meet the headline goal is far greater than the motivation to spend to meet the agreed upon targets to improve NATO capability under DCI, but the historical record suggests that in the absence of a clearly identifiable near term threat, parliamentary and public support for increased defense pending will not coalesce.

Politically, Europe can not afford to fail. So how will success be defined? By 2003, the Rapid Reaction Force will be a force in being, but will almost certainly suffer from grave shortcomings in intelligence, equipment, transport, sustainment, and harmonization of doctrine and training. Informed observers concur that it will be well past 2003 before the Rapid Reaction Force is more than simply a collection of disparate, recycled units and possesses a genuine measure of capability and projectability.³⁵ The danger is that when the deadline approaches, Europe will declare full readiness, and even worse, believe it.

This raises the important issue of how U.S. assets might be made available to assist European rapid reaction forces on an EU mission. Key capabilities would include intelligence collection, long haul communications, combat search and rescue, strategic mobility and all weather precision strike. Further, it raises the specter of what commitments the United States will honor if the crisis escalates to a point beyond the EU's capacity to respond. Will the U.S. and NATO allow the EU to fail, or will they effectively become the cavalry riding to the rescue in a

³⁵ For instance, see General (ret) Klaus Naumann, "Implementing the European Security and Defense Policy: A Practical Vision for Europe," Bulletin published by the Atlantic Council of the United States, August 2000.

crisis which they did not create and from which they had previously elected to opt out?

Everyone recognizes that U.S. military power represents the twenty pound sledgehammer in any potential crisis situation. But the effective resolution of many crises may call for a much smaller hammer, or none at all. Many Europeans think the United States is too quick to use force and too quick to use decisive force, probably because, in their eyes, we are afraid to take casualties. But at the same time, the EU fails to publicize the fact that it has a much broader range of non-military tools available than is often recognized. The potential benefit of a successful ESDP would be the development of a relatively small but effective intervention force that could be employed to best effect in conjunction with a variety of other crisis solving tools in the EU tool box.

The EU already has substantial equity in a variety of so-called "soft security" competencies such as the provision of humanitarian assistance and developmental aid, expert assistance in building institutions which strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law, policing and border control, and technical expertise in diverse areas such as mine clearing, pollution abatement and industrial conversion. If these efforts could be coordinated and synchronized with the judicious employment of military force to create and maintain a stable and secure environment, a powerful synergy could be achieved. Moreover, ESDP would then make a valuable contribution to enhancing the overall security of Europe.

Critics in the United States already feel that Europe doesn't pull its weight in defense and security, and failure by the EU to produce tangible results which transform rhetoric into reality could exacerbate transatlantic tensions. The creation of new and redundant command and control arrangements without a corresponding increase in military capability will not go down well in Washington. Similarly, the CEE states are unconvinced that, as non-EU members, they will get sufficient input and that the entire process won't simply undermine NATO, the organization which, in their eyes, clearly has priority and which they have invested considerable time and effort to join. The fundamental challenge will be for European governments to take the essential but politically difficult decision to increase defense spending and to ensure these

expenditures result in the creation of increased military capability.

Missile Defense

A related issue impacting the development of ESDP and the overall health and vitality of the Alliance is missile defense. In general, European leaders remain adamant in their opposition to any abrogation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and skeptical about the technological feasibility and possible long-term benefits of system deployment.³⁶ But their criticism of the program has been relatively muted, both for the sake of Alliance unity and because everyone recognizes that actual deployment remains far in the future. In the meantime, many of the same leaders have spurned Russia's diplomatic overtures and reacted strongly to Moscow's attempts to split the Alliance on this issue.

The Bush administration recognizes that the political costs of moving forward with missile defense must be paid up front in terms of dealing with concerns by allies and objections by Russia and China, whereas the military payoff in increased security remains several years down the road. For this reason, the administration has been working quietly to defuse some of the international opposition by displaying determination in its intent to proceed, building in-house unity within the Alliance, and engaging in some subtle horse-trading with the Europeans.

Publicly, the administration has sought to take the hard edges off international perceptions of missile defense by "taking the 'N' out of NMD" by reassuring friends and allies that any potential missile defense system would benefit everyone and not signal the U.S. withdrawing to fortress America or represent a superpower diktat to the rest of the world. Privately, the administration has let the allies know that the decision has been made and the deployment of some sort of missile defense system is inevitable. Serious discussion of the details regarding system deployment has been postponed for the time being to gain solidarity on the concept of the need for missile defense. Part of the quid pro quo that has emerged is American acquiescence to the creation of the European rapid reaction force. The U.S. gives its support to the

³⁶ See the Policy Paper by the Atlantic Council of the United States, "European Views of National Missile Defense," September 2000.

development of a more independent European rapid reaction capability and the allies give their support to missile defense, with both sides agreeing that new threats require new responses.

For the CEE states, missile defense has not been a front burner issue. Although they share concern with their western European counterparts about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction technology and how best to deal with it, they differ in their reaction to perceived American unilateralism. In the CEE countries, there is little concern that the U.S. might antagonize Russia with its approach to missile defense, or that it has not adequately consulted with allies. They tend to come from an entirely different direction. Feeling considerably less secure, they seek the protection of U.S. and NATO military power. Traditionally this has been defined as the Article 5 general defense guarantee, and the protection of the American nuclear umbrella. Presumably now this might include missile defense as well, which is viewed as a distant but generally positive possible future development.

Final Thoughts

The Cold War is over, but the challenge of maintaining and strengthening European security remains. The United States has enduring interests in Europe which must be protected by nurturing traditional relationships with old allies and forging meaningful and lasting ties with new ones.

Despite the many disagreements over style and specifics, the basic thrust of U.S. and European security policy is remarkably congruent. Everyone agrees that the goal is to expand and maintain the zone of security, democracy and prosperity. With the Soviet threat gone, Europe is less dependent on the U.S. for its immediate security needs, but almost counter-intuitively, the requirement for continued and active American engagement is as important as ever. I would argue that the friction that results comes from our growing closer together, not growing apart, as globalization drives us toward an increasingly semi-domestic relationship.

In this sense, the CEE states want to be part of the family. Many openly speak of a "return to Europe," implying complete integration along historic, economic, and cultural

lines. For this dream to become reality, their security must be guaranteed. Although they do not discount the value of participation and membership in other international and multilateral organizations, they are unanimous and unwavering in their view that only NATO membership can accomplish this goal.³⁷

The United States should support and foster the achievement of this goal. Not in a haphazard and precipitous manner, but in a rational and measured way that utilizes and adapts the existing, proven tools which encourage and nurture forward progress. PfP, the MAP process and bilateral engagement strategies have all proven complementary and effective in fomenting progress and reinforce the institutional and procedural framework already in place to govern the pace, scope and criteria of enlargement.

EU enlargement is a parallel and complementary process which also contributes to increased security and stability in Europe. While EU membership is no substitute for NATO membership, it does help secure the long-term future of a stable, democratic and prosperous Europe whole and free. Again, the United States should seek to support and encourage the movement of CEE states down this path in conjunction with their progress toward NATO membership.

My aim has been to examine all the arguments closely and to gain an appreciation for the differing perspectives of various nations, blocs of nations, multinational organizations, and governmental and non-governmental agencies. The result, I feel, is a serious and comprehensive examination of the issues, which highlights the main choices before us from a national and Alliance perspective and also offers potentially useful policy prescription. The bottom line is that everything is generally on track, but if we wish to reap the long-term benefits of a Europe whole and free, we must sow the proper seeds early and continue to actively tend the garden.

³⁷ It is interesting to note that the three members of the Visegrad group who have attained NATO membership all actively advocate more enlargement, not less. They would like to see the entire region (less the Balkans) brought into NATO, generally the sooner the better.

Notes on Sources

During the course of conducting research for this paper, I have been fortunate to enjoy broad access to an exceptionally wide array of informed sources. Both in Europe and in the United States, I have been afforded the opportunity to interview, consult, discuss, and otherwise interact with a wide variety of subject matter experts both within and outside government. On the American side, the Washington area offers numerous contacts operating in official or non-official capacity, both public and private, with diverse institutional perspectives. From the Pentagon to the State Department to Capital Hill, it is not difficult to find engaged and informed sources with a definitive point of view. On the European side, the environment has been equally conducive to in-depth research, with unexpectedly open access available through embassy visits and the think tank seminar and lecture circuit. In addition, my discussions at NATO Headquarters in Brussels and SHAPE in Casteau with key players actively involved in the issues at hand were especially useful in this regard. In particular, the opportunity to engage with representatives of the central and eastern European states has been exceptionally rich. In addition to the normally expected low and mid level contacts, I have spoken with a large number of current and former ministers of defense, ministers of foreign affairs, ambassadors to the United States or NATO, and in a few cases, heads of state.

As one might expect, the observations and opinions obtained in this manner are not always subject to attribution. Sometimes the comments are expressed on the record, but generally the most candid and accurate impressions offered are on background. Consequently, I have elected not to identify and cite interview sources throughout the paper. There is some risk to this approach, as the reader is unable to independently verify source material. Further, I am well aware that some of my arguments are controversial and likely to draw fire from several corners. This is intentional. I stand by my arguments and my sources. In no case have assertions been made recklessly or frivolously. They are drawn from multiple well-informed and often highly placed sources, and I realize they will often be in direct conflict with someone else's perspective. In my view, the entire purpose of the paper is to contribute to well-informed and wide

ranging debate by offering clear policy positions in plain language without the usual obfuscation of diplomatic doubletalk and political sensitivity.

I am deeply grateful to all that assisted in my efforts.